

Tolerance and Enlightenment is the Key, Mr. Scruggs

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to Brandon Scruggs' letter that was printed on Oct. 3, 1996. I want to first thank Brandon for stating his opinion about Spectrum Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Student Organization.

I would like to recommend that students first educate themselves on issues before they choose to state an opinion.

The first issue I would like to address is the idea of Spectrum on a campus founded by a Christian church. Elon College was founded by the United Church of Christ (UCC) which has an impressive history of opposition to discrimination based on race gender and sexual orientation.

The UCC was the first American main-line Christian church to ordain an openly gay man (William Johnson, 1972) and an openly lesbian woman (Anne Holmes, 1977).

The ordination of male and female homosexuals was formally accepted by the UCC in 1980. The UCC's clergy are also permitted to bless same-sex unions. In 1993, the UCC General Synod voted by a wide margin to denounce the ban on homosexuals in the military and in 1994, UCC leaders, including its president Paula Sherry, joined the "March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation."

The UCC General Synod has formally urged local churches to welcome gay and lesbian members and advocate in their behalf against discrimination and persecution. Therefore, there is no doubt in my mind that the UCC would fully support Spectrum.

The second issue I would like to address is the idea of flyers and SGA funding. First of all, Spectrum has just as much right to post

flyers as any other student organization even if you do not agree with the organization. Freedom of speech is protected by the U.S. Constitution and hanging flyers is simply expressing that right.

There are many organizations which I do not belong to or necessarily agree with, but I still pay my SGA fee because I feel that the campus offers several excellent student organizations.

The first major and most significant research about human sexuality was by Kinsey. According to Kinsey, 10 percent of the human population is composed of homosexuals.

If this figure is put into the context of the Elon student body, Elon has 341 full time undergraduate students who are homosexual. These 341 students pay the college a total \$1,786,382.00 in tuition for one semester and \$20,400.00 in SGA fees.

Due to these statistics, I feel that Spectrum should receive funding from SGA.

The last issue I would like to address is tolerance. People that refuse to be tolerant of those that are "different" from them are simply choosing not to educate themselves and open up their minds.

The intolerance that is within the American society is what has historically caused several problems and the problems will only continue unless they are directly challenged.

There is enough hate in this society and we certainly do not need any more.

Therefore I recommend that every Elon College student educate themselves before forming an opinion about Spectrum.

Josh McIntosh

To the Editor:

Add religion to sexuality and you get a volatile mixture, as shown by the early conversations I have heard about Spectrum, the gay and lesbian student group now seeking recognition. I encourage a healthy airing of our attitudes and feelings. What I hope we can avoid, on all sides, is demonizing those who differ from ourselves. This will not be easy. Sexuality will always be a "hot topic" because it addresses deeply personal matters about which we have varying degrees of comfort. Religion similarly stirs our passions if we care enough to have deeply held beliefs.

it may be helpful for you to know that since 1975 the United Church of Christ, with which Elon is associated, has adopted a series of resolutions during its national Synod meetings to proclaim itself an "open and affirming" church. That is, gay and lesbian persons are accepted as having equal standing before God and in this church. So a group like Spectrum is welcomed by the national UCC. I invite you to visit my office to read and discuss the particulars of these resolutions.

There are, of course, a variety of views held by individual Christians and this can be confusing both to those inside and outside the faith. Not everyone draws up the same

list of sins. The fact is that Jesus was virtually silent on the topic of human sexuality. he said a great deal, and pointedly so, about power and poverty and about befriending "the least of these."

But the Gospels do not report that Jesus addressed sexuality per se, perhaps because his attention was on a more comprehensive view of the total human person. People become who God meant them to be by experiencing love and compassion. So, there are clear implications for how any Christian is to express sexuality- always as an expression of love and never as an abuse of power over another.

I recommend caution about issuing harsh condemnations in the name of Jesus. He was himself chastised for associating with sinners: "Look, he even eats with them!" And he reserved his own most pointed rebuke for the self-assured scribes and Pharisees who believed they held the key to righteousness. I invite any student who wants to explore what the Bible has to say about sexuality to joining me in careful study. There is for more variety to be found than the passages of condemnation frequently quoted by those who are sure they are right.

**Richard W. McBride
Chaplain**

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in response to Brandon W. Scruggs' comments about the formation of the Spectrum. Sure — we all have opinions about the gay-lesbian issue. I do not agree with it, but I will not deny anyone's right to happiness.

They wouldn't have formed this group unless there was a need for it. When we come to get an education, we get a real-life education also, which includes being informed about different people, such as gays and lesbians.

Do you think that, at Elon, we have no gays and lesbians? They are people, and don't they deserve to be represented? We should pay for this association, because honestly, don't you want everyone to be represented?

Is it fair to exclude people? Everyone deserves the right to an education, including being informed about the issues of gays and lesbians. You see, not only gays and lesbians go to these meetings. It's also for people who want to know more of the issue, and are trying to have an open mind. After all, isn't that what we came to college for?

Who gives you the right to decide what is wrong and what is right? Are you God? Get real, this is the twenty-first century we are coming into.

Isn't it time we are more accepting of things? We'll accept drugs, pre-marital sex and underage drinking, but homosexuality, uh, they are freaks.

Yes, they do live differently, but don't we all live differently? You, most likely, know someone that is gay or a lesbian, because one out of ten people are gay or lesbian.

The reason they wouldn't tell you is because of the narrow view you hold, which would probably end your relationship with that person.

It is comments like this that keep our country in the past. Don't we want to move forward? I think that it is time for people to stop finding reasons to divide people.

Rachel L. Rawlings

Scruggs Support Group

To the editor:

I am writing this letter to respond to the letter written in last week's *Pendulum* by Brandon Scruggs. I completely and totally agree with what Mr. Scruggs had to say. One of the main reasons I chose to attend Elon three years ago was that the college was founded by The Church of Christ and supposedly based on Christian ideals. I was not naive enough to think that each and every professor and student would profess these ideals, but I had hoped that at least a few would. Throughout my years at Elon I have learned that there are a handful of professors and many more students who still believe in the values and ideals Elon was founded on.

But now, in my senior year, I am asked to accept a group that is in direct contradiction to the principles upon which this school was founded! The Elon College mission statement says "Elon students should develop...a sense of integrity, high ethical standards and significant religious insights

and practice."

Yet the students are being forced to fund a group that advocates no ethical standards as well as a disregard for religious insight or practice.

I am concerned that the college and the student government association have become so concerned with encouraging diversity that they have forgotten the difference between right and wrong. Contrary to what people would like us to believe there are still, and always will be, those acts which are wrong.

I would not expect the S.G.A. to fund a group that supports the acceptance of murderers, kidnappers, or child molesters, and they should not fund a group the spectrum group!

The hard-earned money that students and parents send to Elon should be used to better our educational experience, not to fund a group as perverse as spectrum.

David E. Weslow

Pissed off yet?!

Write a letter!



Don't just sit there!

Letters: 300 words or less. 5412 Campus Box. Name and phone number, please. Anonymous letters are not published.